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ABSTRACT

Examples of personality types of supervising teachers and student teachers are described. Conflicts arising out of these clashes are illustrated and used to point up the need for personality matching in the selection of student teachers for student teaching programs. Some personality types listed are energetic and creative supervisors, meek student teachers, rigid supervisors, submissive student teachers, contemptuous supervisors, and bored student teachers. (JB)

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PERSONALITY MATCHING FOR STUDENT-TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

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There is a problem inherent in many teacher-training programs that has been largely neglected. There might be a situation, perhaps more common than we realize, that would tend to limit the development of the student-teacher.

Student-teaching is the undoubted heart of the teacher-training program. Indeed, the single most important force in preparing a student to become a teacher is his experience as a student-teacher. The purpose of this paper is to focus on the problem of matching the personality of the student-teacher with that of the supervisor in order to produce a more effective future teacher.

A more intensive study needs to be made of the two individuals to be brought together. What kind of super-

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vising teacher should be paired with the kind of personality found in the student teacher? There is the problem, and little work has been done in that area.

Consider, for one example, a supervising teacher who is full of life, has snapping eyes, a lively manner, is alert to the problems of the day and the problems of the students in the class. Sounds like an ideal supervising teacher for anyone. There might be a real problem, though, if she were paired with a student-teacher who is also tremendously energetic. The result will be two chefs trying to stir the soup in different directions. There will be general frustration for supervising teacher, student-teacher, and for the poor class that is bound to sense the conflict.

On the other hand, the pairing of the energetic supervising teacher with the meek student-teacher will prove equally frustrating. A terrified student-teacher will never develop into an effective teacher. Such a student-teacher will be willing to ignore everything learned in Education classes and use the poorest teaching techniques if such techniques seem to be what the supervising teacher wants. The student-teacher may be so fearful, he will lie about his work, saying anything to forestall what he believes might be severe criticism.

There is the motherly type of supervising teacher. She regards the student-teacher as her own little boy and

surrounds him with sweetness and light. She might even be more interested in making him happy than in making him into a good teacher. She talks with the coordinator in a defensive manner and excuses any possible shortcomings the student-teacher might have.

Pairing her with a shy student teacher would mean that the teacher would spend all her time guarding the student-teacher. She might never encourage him to use such teaching techniques as would give him some much-needed self-confidence. Pairing her with an aggressive student-teacher would lead to her letting the untrained person dictate to the trained one with no guidelines from the supervising teacher or the deluded coordinator who is informed only of successes and not of fiascos.

Consider still another category of supervising teacher. There is the type who is herself insecure, who knows little about children and less about theories of teaching. She does have a beautiful command of memorized facts. She may insist that the student-teacher forget whatever he has learned in those Education classes. Rote learning will be stressed. Such things as sentence diagramming will be featured for most of the semester, for the teacher is secure in such knowledge. A student-teacher will need to be a diplomat in order to try anything new, and a student teacher who is the dutifully obedient type will not develop in that situation.

There is another type of insecure teacher. She is at her wit's end by the end of the day, not knowing what to do with all those ill-mannered children. She will listen with eagerness to any suggestion the student-teacher might make. She will listen eagerly to any suggestion that any child might make, or the janitor or anyone else might come up with. Her goal is to get through the day some way.

A student-teacher with such a supervisor will get an idea of the horrors of teaching. He will find that some of his ideas are immature, and his mistakes will further discourage him, if he is somewhat of a dreamer to begin with. A more mature student-teacher, more practical in evaluating a situation and a method of meeting it, will find that such authority thrust upon him will be of real benefit to him, and he might even help the poor supervisor.

Some supervising teachers live by superorganization. Such a teacher will have records, charts, plans, and books of tests, all with tables for percentile calculations. The student-teacher may well become her file clerk. The student-teacher may spend all his time scoring papers, making charts, filling in blank spaces on pieces of ruled paper. Somehow, the student-teacher will never get around to doing any teaching unless he has a certain degree of energy and resolution. Pity the poor student-teacher who is something of an introvert. That student will learn record-keeping as having a greater value than working with living students.

A contemptuous type of supervising teacher exists. Her attitude is that she does not need any wet-behind-the-ears college student in her dominion. She accepts the student-teacher only because her principal told her to. She will do all the work, perhaps letting the student-teacher take attendance. She will expect the student-teacher to sit quietly thereafter.

One kind of student-teacher would be bored into hating teaching. A more aggressive student might at least seek help from the coordinator and the principal and change a barrier situation into one of sharing. A student-teacher who accepts whatever happens and tells the coordinaor that all is well, that is the student-teacher who can never develop with that supervisor.

These are enough examples to point out the great importance of someone in authority making an analysis of both student-teacher and supervising teacher before the assignment of the student teaching period. The student-teacher needs to be matched with a supervisor who can most help him develop. A very close evaluating of supervising teachers is essential.

There needs to be an even closer liason between the coordinator and the principals of the different cooperating schools. There needs to be more evaluating of the student-teacher during his early work in Education, and that information should be passed on to the coordinator to help

him in making his assignments.

An informal talk can often provide a coordinator with a great deal of insight, but often a coordinator has little time to talk with principals and supervisors, much less to seek out guidance personnel. Too great a class load or too much time to be spent on travel defeat the purpose of a coordinator's work.

Another weakness in our system is the fact that the coordinating teacher seldom has the student in a college class for any length of time before making the student-teaching assignments. The coordinator seldom has any contact with other members of the department who might have evaluated the student for personality traits and not just performance on given subject matter.

The coordinator needs to have time and a concern, a concern for studying the student-teacher and time to carry out that study. A better matching of personalities of student-teacher and supervisor could well mean the difference between the stifling and the development of many of our student-teachers.